

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: ,/A

TAGS: EAIR, EIND, ETRD, EEC

SUBJECT: EC AIRCRAFT POLICY

REF: A) ROME 4206, B) PARIS 6814, C) EC BRUSSELS 239

1. IN CONNECTION WITH VISIT OF BRESLER (EUR/RPE) AND SAMMON (COMMERCE), ON MARCH 15 WE MET WITH RICHARD NOBBS, AN EC COMMISSION OFFICIAL WORKING ON THE EC AIRCRAFT POLICY. THE CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON US-EUROPEAN COLLABORATION ON AIRCRAFT DEVELOPMENT AND VARIOUS FRENCH OPTIONS.

2. ACCORDING TO NOBBS, BOEING HAS TOLD EC COMMISSION OFFICIALS THAT THEY ARE INTERESTED IN THE PROPOSED AIRBUS A-300 B-10 VERSION BECAUSE BOEING'S STUDIES OF THE BOEING 7X7 HAVE SHOWN THEM THAT THE B-10 IS A REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE 7X7. AND, DIFFERING FROM EC AIRCRAFT POLICY CHIEF PREVIDI (SEE REFTEL C), NOBBS SAID FRENCH (AEROPATIALE) AND OTHER EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURERS DO NOT RULE OUT COLLABORATION WITH BOEING ON THE AIRBUS B-10. FROM THE EC COMMISSION'S VIEW HOWEVER, SUCH COLLABORATION SHOULD FOLLOW AGREEMENT BY THE EUROPEANS ON AN AIRBUS B-10 PROGRAM.

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3. NOBBS SIAD THAT AN AIRBUS B-10 PROGRAM POSED A

DILEMMA FOR THE FRENCH. THE FRENCH ARE INVESTING HEAVILY IN THE NEW CFM-56 GE/SNECMA TEN-TON ENGINE, WHICH COULD POWER THE PROPOSED MERCURE 200, WHICH DESSAULT IS DISCUSSING WITH DOUGLAS. THE AIRBUS B-10 WOULD USE A GE OR ROLLS ROYCE ENGINE AND WOULD COMPETE TO SOME EXTENT WITH THE MERCURE 200 AND DRAIN OFF SCARCE RESOURCES FROM A MERCURE 200 PROGRAM. THE FRENCH THEREFORE MAY FAVOR THE DESSAULT PLANE ALTHOUGH THEY COULD ULTIMATELY PARTICIPATE IN BOTH AIRCRAFT PROGRAMS. NOBBS NOTED THE EC WOULD PREFER THAT FRANCE CHOOSE THE AIRBUS B-10 WHICH WOULD BE MORE EUROPEAN. IN PASSING, NOBBS SAID THAT THE GERMANS HAVE PUT A LOT OF MONEY IN RESEARCH ON THE B-10, THE ITALIANS ARE INTERESTED IN BILATERAL COLLABORATION WITH THE US COMPANIES AND THE BRITISH ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH NATIONALIZATION ISSUES. HE CONCLUDED THAT THE FUTURE OF A EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT POLICY IS UP TO THE FRENCH.

3. REGARDING THE SPINELLI PAPER, NOBBS SAID THAT REACTIONS OF COMMISSIONS OF THE EC ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE THAT LOOKED AT THE PAPER WERE, IN GENERAL, FAVORABLE BUT RECOGNIZED THAT THEIR APPROBATION WAS NOT PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT. HE STRESSED THAT THE PAPER REPRESENTED A FIRST POSITION WHICH WOULD BE MODIFIED DOWNWARD AND AGREED THAT THE IDEA OF A COMMON EC FINANCING OF R & D WOULD BE DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO SELL TO THE MEMBER STATES. HINTON

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